



**East of England Biodiversity Forum Meeting Minutes Wednesday 3 July 2013
RSPB, Wallasea Island Essex**

<p>Present</p> <p>Steve Scott (chair)~Forestry Commission Mark Iley ~ Essex LBAP Catherine Weightman ~ Natural England Rebecca Banks ~ Essex LBAP Catherine Wyatt ~ Herts LBAP Gen Broad ~ Suffolk LBAP Simon Odell ~ Landscape East Richard Barnes ~ Woodland Trust Henry Bexley ~ National Trust Jeff Kew ~ RSPB Deb Howard ~ Essex Wildlife Trust (minute taker)</p>	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Andrea Kelly – Broads Authority John Sharpe ~ RSPB Deborah Marchant ~ Cambridgeshire County Council Liz Anderson ~ Central Bedfordshire Council/Alge rep Jennifer Faulkner ~ National Trust Dominic Coath ~ Environment Agency Mike Drew ~ Anglian Water Michelle Russell ~ Natural England David Hooton ~ Deer Initiative Haidee Bishop ~ Norfolk LBAP</p>
---	---

	Action
<p>Minutes from the last meeting Held on 19 March 2013 were agreed as correct</p> <p>Update from secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Iley informed the forum that there is £11971.50 in the EEBF budget. £10 had been spent on refreshments since the last meeting. • Catherine Weightman asked whether the forum could fund a Fens for the Future event on 4 November 2013 at Wicken Fen for Lincs, Cambs and Norfolk LNPs looking at socio-economic case studies. It was agreed that £500 would be given now with the possibility of further modest funding later, but only if not other funding support can be found. • Natural England put forward a request for part funding another County Wildlife Sites workshop. Details to follow. 	
<p>Matters arising and action points from previous meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine Weightman gave a summary of the Triennial Review later in the meeting • It was agreed that the EA proposal to deliver 10,000 hectares of the 200,000 hectare target (an outcome of the Biodiversity 2020) delivered through the DEFRA Synergies project would be discussed at the next meeting as DC was present and the project had not quite been finalised. 	DC
<p>Environment Agency and Natural England Triennial review – Catherine Weightman</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/triennial-review-of-the-environment-agency-ea-and-natural-england-ne</p> <p>Natural England and the Environment Agency are not going to be merged. The key</p>	

summary, however, is:

- With the Environment Agency (EA), NE need to improve our delivery by giving our **common customers and partners a more integrated and effective customer experience**. The report repeats the messages that NE received through other channels about the need for Natural England to be more pragmatic in the delivery of our duties.
- NE need to **innovate further and achieve greater efficiency** so that NE can remain resilient in the face of difficult budgetary challenges ahead.
- With EA, we need to explore further how we can better **integrate land management capability and customer experience and do so more efficiently** (it rules out any transfer of back office functions to RPA in the short term, pending the CAP implementation)
- With EA, NE need to look at how it can **consolidate its planning advice processes to communicate a coherent offer to developers and government organisations**.
- NE should continue to look at ways of **reducing the regulatory burden** on customers
- NE should continue to explore opportunities to **increase the involvement of delivery partners in the corporate and voluntary sectors in access and engagement activities**, including transferring, where appropriate, delivery to these partners (it rules out selling off the NNR estate, but encourages further long-term discussions about voluntary sector management of sites and innovative funding streams)
- NE should explore ways to **harmonise and make our evidence work more efficient**, including data commissioning, collection and interpretation where we can.
- NE must secure **further back office reforms** as part of the Defra network Strategic Alignment project
- NE must **streamline marine conservation advice with the JNCC**, including the possible delegation of renewable energy advice in English waters beyond 12 nautical miles from the JNCC to Natural England.

What happens next?

NE will now study the Review in detail and have further discussions with Defra, the Environment Agency and, importantly, our customers and partners to address the remaining challenges NE still face and to map out its priorities for the year ahead. NE

<p>expect this work to start immediately.</p> <p>Defra has asked NE to produce an action plan in response to the Review by autumn 2013, and an update on progress in June 2014.</p>	
<p>Oak Processionary Moth – Steve Scott</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see Steve Scott’s presentation for identification and further information(attached). • In previous year there have been false reports – mainly Brown Tailed Moth, however, there were positive reports in the East of England last summer. • Intensive surveys have been carried out. • It started in imports of semi-mature oak from Italy in 2006. Spreading in London, 4000 nests were reported in Richmond Park last year. • The hairs of the caterpillar cause a nasty rash to the skin and can also get into the lungs and cause respiratory problems. • The moth can be confused with brown tail moths which are distinctly identified by 2 orange dots. • They can be seen in oak trees in April and May grouped together in nests • Kew Gardens have almost managed to eradicate the problem. • The problem is publicised in local areas. 	
<p>Deer Tagging Project – Rebecca Banks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebecca Banks informed the forum that following on from Oxlip and deer surveys carried out in 2001/02 and 2011/12 it was recognised from the data that the management of deer was essential and part of this process was to carry out deer tagging to identify how far deer travel in the landscape. • The tagging is carried out by groups walking through the woodland and covering lying fawns and tagging them with a coloured tag. • 3 were tagged in Epping Forest in 2012 and so far this year 8 deer have been tagged in Epping and Hatfield. Each area has different coloured tag to identify which forest the deer have been tagged in. Epping Forest have red tags, Hatfield Forest have blue tags. The website/number to report sightings is www.deertags.org.uk 0845 468 0522. • There is a deer tagging project in partnership with UEA but the cost is extremely high. Rebecca Banks will look at the costing and circulate to the forum members for comments. Could be a possibility that the project could be an LNP/LEP project. • Deer damage costs £10,000,000 each year in the East of England. 	<p>RB</p>
<p>A discussion on the value and use of EEBF website – Catherine Weightman www.eobiodiversity.org</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website costs £210 per year, created and managed by Phil at 2020 Creative • It was felt that the website is a good repository for information. • The stats for the website are as follows: website http://www.eobiodiversity.org/ stats viewable through http://eobiodiversity.org/stats/ <p>Key figures are</p> <p>May 143 visits averaging 18 seconds duration June 271 visits averaging 39 seconds duration</p>	

<p>Top downloads Fens report and EEBF delivery plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was felt that links for LNPs, LBAPs, contacts and record centres should be updated. Deb Howard asked all forum members to look at the website and provide correct links and contact details etc. 	All
<p>Update of LNP/NIA/LEP activity</p> <p>Herts The LNP Board has approved the Terms of reference and the 1 year work plan and strategic plan have been signed off. The board are meeting next Friday. There has not been any response from LEPs and there is still a vacancy on the board. A proposal has been made that the Chair of the LNP engages with the LEP chair.</p> <p>Wild Anglia The manifesto has now been published and is on the website. There are close links with the LNP and LEP. The Norfolk Biodiversity partnership is advertising for a new Co-ordinator. Gen informed the group that her post is still part time but has been made a permanent post.</p> <p>Essex Defra are still interested in an Essex LNP. A meeting is to be set up for discussions between Keith Moore (EA), Essex County Council and Essex Biodiversity Project/Essex Wildlife Trust.</p> <p>NIA Mark Iley has been to the Greater Thames Marshes NIA meeting recently, 4 funding bids are going to be worked up – one life, 2 interreg and an HLF bid.</p> <p>Luton/Beds Please find attached a briefing note that the Beds LNP did in the Spring and can update it with the newly elected chair's name, Cllr Richard Stay, Exec Member for External Affairs, elected in April. Other than that nothing more to report as yet on LNP.</p> <p>NIA The Wildlife Trust, RSPB, and Greensand Trust are leading the development of National Character Area 90, the Bedfordshire Greensand ridge, (http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/bedfordshire_greensand_ridge.aspx) as a locally identified Nature Improvement Area. Central Bedfordshire Council are funding efforts to build an evidence base, vision and action plan and broaden support. The Wildlife Trust and Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre are leading on the evidence base side of the project. An outline of the work is as follows:</p> <p><i>A range of ecological information will be assembled and presented in a format which clearly demonstrates the significance of National Character Area 90 (The Greensand Ridge). This will include information on designated sites, habitats and species and will involve both existing data sets and information not yet digitised. We will also need to explore the relationship of this species and habitat data to issues such as climate change.</i></p> <p><i>To identify (and create) potential Ecological Networks at a range of scales, opportunities for expanding, buffering and linking sites will need to be explored and related to soils and</i></p>	

<p><i>topography. This will be done from existing data sets, including aerial photographs. This theoretical information will be turned, through more sophisticated targeting, to more practical uses. Using agri-environment scheme data to show the application of schemes across the Greensand Ridge area we will make particular reference to options which may be helping to achieve our objectives, and identifying those areas not already included within schemes.</i></p> <p><i>Alongside this, the knowledge of a range of stakeholders will be applied to this 'Targeting Map' to create an accompanying Action Plan (such knowledge includes landowner relationships and attitudes, previous projects, CWS condition). This will then give us information on where best to target resources.</i></p> <p><i>The work will be delivered through a series of workshops and desktop analysis, led by the Wildlife Trust .</i></p> <p>Greater Cambs A board meeting and workshops have been suggested but they are struggling with capacity, they have not had success in engaging with the LEP. Geoff Blighty (EA) has offered some time to help out</p>	
<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry Bexley informed the forum that Environment Agency signs that appear at sluices are no longer relevant; having spoken to the Environment Agency he has established that landowners are now responsible for the sluice. • Richard Barnes informed the group that the observations at Pound Farm in Suffolk have highlighted devastating effects on semi-mature Ash trees. • He also recommended a publication for forum members to read http://cehsciencenews.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/ceh-contributes-new-BES-report-extreme-events-freshwater-ecosystems.html • Catherine Weightman updated the forum on the NCA map by Natural England. 65 of the 159 areas have been completed and work is taking place to get them all completed. http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/default.aspx • Gen Broad informed the group about the Seagrass Action Plan, to revive Seagrass in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. A student at Essex University is keen to carry out a study with the support of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA). • Mark Iley told the group of a Catchment Partnership Fund. Essex Wildlife Trust will be submitting an expression of interest with Defra within the Thames and Combined Essex Catchments. It was suggested that maybe a speaker could come to an EEBF to give some more information about the process and getting involved. It was also felt that it would be good to look at a project in Spring 2014. Maybe contact the Norfolk catchment manager for a visit and talk. • Simon Odell informed the forum that he will be moving on from Hertfordshire Council in August to set up his own company. • National Grid are carrying out work at Sizewell in Suffolk, 3000 people are working on the infrastructure, there will be detrimental impact on Wildlife. Several LNRs in Suffolk will be affected. 	DH
<p>Date of next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 8 October 2013 – Heartwood Hertfordshire 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting closed at 13.00 p.m. followed by lunch, Jeff Kew gave a presentation 	

on the work being carried out at Wallasea and followed by a guided walk around RSPB Wallasea Island Essex	